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The Spectator

Thursday, November 30, 2023

Volume LXVI
Number X

Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

We dump way more than we think: waste management efforts at Hamilton College

by Lizzie Herr '24
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING EDITOR

Hamilton's Climate Action Plan promises to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, and the Hamilton community is working on a variety of levels to reach this goal. Yet, invisible to many students, Hamilton creates hundreds of pounds of food waste every day, in large part due to unsustainable practices from Hamilton students themselves.

Brian Hansen, Director of Environmental Protection Safety and Sustainability at Hamilton, said that Hamilton's community was much more mindful about waste generation back in 2004, two years after Hansen arrived at the College, when Hamilton had historically high recycling rates at 25% of all generated waste. Today, despite continued efforts across campus, recycling rates have plateaued at 22%. Hansen worries about distraction. "[People] think that we have all these other things to do, whether it be carbon neutrality, decarbonization," he said, "people forget about waste management."

In addition to carbon neutrality, Hamilton has a goal to have 90% landfill waste diversion by 2030. This, according to the Sustainability Action Plan, means that, "Hamilton will aim to reduce its solid waste sent to landfills by 90% by 2030 as compared to the 2007 baseline." Reaching this goal, according to Hansen, will require more than institutional changes, it will require changes in individual and community behavior. Hansen said that, "It's about people and the things that we do on a day to day basis, it's much more behavioral in nature."

Hansen described how the College has seen an increase in the cost of removing waste. He explained that the cost for Hamilton's waste removal service contrast increased by $93,000 just from 2022-23, from $287,000 to $380,000.

To put it in perspective, he said, "So if the average cost of a student's tuition dollars is $35,000, it's ten students coming here, their tuition dollars directed to nothing more than waste and moving the trash and recycling off campus."

Lack of careful waste practices are a further financial burden on the College because of waste management's careful detection of contaminated recyclable materials. Hansen explained that the trucks can detect black trash bags contaminating recyclable materials, which the driver then has to remove, at a $150 charge to Hamilton per bag.

With Hamilton spending so many tuition dollars on waste management, the Sustainability Working Group is trying to shift student practices in a more sustainable, and economic, direction.

The individual indifference toward waste management may come from misconceptions. Sara Soika, Environmental Health and Safety Specialist at Hamilton, talked about misinformation people believe about recycling. She said, "So it's also a myth that it's just going to the landfill anyway, right? It is going on the same truck, but there's a divider on the truck and part of it's recycling and part of it's landfill."

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN HANSEN

Trash overflows outside of Bundy dormitory.

Hansen and Soika suggested that most people do not know about the complex working of the Oneida Herkimer Solid Waste Authority (OHSWA) in Utica. Hansen said, "We are used to people concerned saying, 'Oh, I have a little bit of donut dust on my plate.' It doesn't matter." At OHSWA's single stream recycling facility, Hansen said recycling "goes up these big conveyor belts to a group of people where all they're doing is picking out little pieces of trash. Otherwise, it goes to this big area where you have air jets and magnets and things pushing [to sort recyclables]."

According to an OHSWA spokesperson in their website's "Single Stream Recycling Center Video," recyclables go through an extensive sorting process into cans, cardboard and different types of plastic. Items are sorted into large bales and then the Authority markets the bales to manufacturers so they can produce new items out of the recycled materials.

Ellie Sangree '24, a Hamilton Sustainability Coordinator, said that the OHSWA recycling center takes, "aluminum cans, paper, and whatnot and you can see the final product of these gigantic cubes of raw material." These recycled materials feed back into a local and circular economy in the form of everything from Adirondack chairs to aluminum cans. Sangree hopes that if students learn about the importance of recycling at the local level, they may be more mindful about their practices.

The myths around recycling and waste management are the source of Hansen's and Soika's educationally framed focus. Hansen said, "Some of [the solution is] corporate responsibility. But it's more than that. Really, at the end of the day, it's trying to do what Hamilton does best, which is to tap into our educational prowess, whether it's in the classroom or not."

In order to reach more students, Hansen is focusing on establishing orientation programming so that first-year students have access to proper sustainability and waste practices right when they arrive on campus. Willa Karr '25, a Hamilton Sustainability Coordinator, echoed the necessity of educating incoming students about Hamilton specific procedures and expectations. She said, "People are coming from everywhere...in the U.S., and from around the world." Educating new students, according to Karr, is crucial to accommodating people coming

from different backgrounds and upbringings as "most people have never even eaten at the dining halls before, that's a bit overwhelming in itself."

Hansen said that despite all of the hard work, research and investment in new technologies that he and Soika do on campus, "at the end of the day, we're in the business of education. And so if we can educate our current students and future students on how to be prepared for the long term impacts of climate change, that's the role we're trying to fill."

Educating a whole campus around careful sustainability practices remains a challenge. While the Hamilton Sustainability Coordinators are working hard alongside Hansen and Soika to reach carbon neutrality and sustainability goals by 2030, they report an absence of widespread knowledge about their efforts. Events such as the Hamilton Fall Sustainability Fair have low turnout from people outside of HSC or the Environmental Studies department. Karr said this year there were "like, only six people there."

Karr said that she and the sustainability coordinators have discussed how, "people come to events when you offer them free food. But we're leading a sustainability fair about waste management, we're not going to cater Chipotle or something. It's like, how do we get people here without bribing them?"

Sangree agreed that there is a pattern in campus culture to be incentivized by food or free items. For instance, as a sustainability worker, she noticed the accumulated waste from student organized events at the end of the academic year during Cram and Scram. In reference to Campus Activities Board's Stuff-a-Cub event, she said, "We just uncovered this mountain of teddy bears, probably over 100 of them." This moment led her to question how Hamilton as a community can change their values of attendance for events. She said, "I think we all know that it is a really good incentive for kids to go to programming and we don't want to detract from that character. But we need to figure out what are some ways that we can prioritize experiences over stuff."

In our current campus culture where many students attend events based on free food or items, Sangree asked, "It's a common thread of 'how do we replace a culture of excess with a culture of enough?'" To promote a culture of sustainability education, Karr asked, "What if every class had some sort of requirement, to go to this [sustainability] talk we have or to go and see how our food waste is generated related to the curriculum?"

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN HANSEN

Bulk amounts of recycling are handled by the Oneida Herkimer Solid Waste Authority.

The Sustainability Action Plan suggests that, "Within Hamilton's open curriculum, students are required to complete three writing-intensive courses, a quantitative and symbolic reasoning course, and a departmental course addressing social structural and institutional hierarchies. Currently there are no requirements for students to take courses that discuss sustainability topics."

Sangree further sees the lack of education as a problem because "We're taught for good reason in environmental studies to be skeptical of institutions and skeptical of corporations."

Although she wants to see Hamilton divest from fossil fuel investments, she said institutional skepticism "can potentially get in the way of our actual progress." She added, "[Students] put all of their energy into criticism toward divestment. I'm not sure that that's ultimately that productive."

Sangree thinks current sustainable efforts are unknown by a large portion of the Hamilton community. Programs like Harvest, overseen by Shey Sanges '26 and Katie Rockford '24, are saving around one hundred pounds of leftover food from Commons and 60-80 lbs from McEwen daily. These leftovers, according to Sanges, are donated to the Rescue Mission of Utica, Hope House, Catholic Charities of Rome, and Mother Marianne's West Side Kitchen in Utica.

Harvest has made an important step in involving more of the campus communities in the sustainability and waste management efforts. For instance, Sanges reported that last year, "the total food saved was 12,322 pounds. We had 84 individual volunteers of just people who signed up for their shifts and then we had 17 groups, so that was like another approximately 119 [people] for a total of just over 200 [volunteers]."

She also spoke about the wider impact that Harvest is making. Sanges said, "One thing we've been talking to food pantries about recently is that they love the food that comes from Hamilton. Folks tell us that Hamilton food is the best food. It's seasoned, it's cooked already. All they have to do is reheat it."

Sangree is another example of improving Hamilton's sustainability through the Green Attributes Project. She said her project created a, "systemized plan for categorizing, delineating and then adding more naturalized features throughout Hamilton's campus to try to cultivate sustainability in places that are not just the forests."

From the many conversations she had through her development of the Green Attributes Project and her work with HSC, Sangree found that

"I think we all know that it is a really good incentive for kids to go to programming and we don't want to detract from that character. But we need to figure out what are some ways that we can prioritize experiences over stuff." - Ellie Sangree '24

students are crucial to bridging the gap between departments on campus that may otherwise not be talking or working together. She said, "A student can kind of more easily and without bias navigate how interests might align while otherwise these conversations might not happen organically."

Sangree emphasized the importance of working with faculty and staff on establishing sustainable practices. She said, "Getting faculty on the same page I think is way more of a priority [than students] because they set the culture for when new Hamilton kids arrive." She explained that faculty is a more long-term solution than students, "We're trying to work all across campus to understand how different groups view the issue of waste management."

HSC, according to Sangree, is working with the Procurement Department, with a goal to, "Make it as easy as possible for them to transition their purchasing into more reusable, less single use kind of materials which we know make up a large amount of the waste on campus." At the same time, Sangree works with a wide range of departments from Admissions to orientation programming to ensure sustainable practices are being taught on every part of campus.

There are also crucial institutional changes that will help reduce waste on campus. Hansen said, "It's not all just behavior change. It's making good contractual technology changes simultaneously to begin to narrow the gap." For instance, Soika oversaw the implementation of a new liquid biodigester in Commons to minimize the amount of physical waste emerging from the dining halls. She said, it uses "very big cells using oxygen to digest the food. There are enzymes similar to your stomach that help break the food down. Turns out we call it greywater and discharges to the wastewater treatment plant. So the other thing is this is a constant process, it goes all day long." Sangree said institutional support is crucial to reducing waste on campus. She said, "I think a lot of it is like making sure that sustainability is being funded properly. For example, awarding money to get better signage, getting better receptacles or areas costs money, but that's an institutional investment."

Sanges talked about Hamilton's need

to invest in hiring more staff in the dining halls. When *The Spectator* asked Sanges about the possibility of having a designated Parkhurst employee to sort food properly into compost, trash and recycling in the dining halls she cited a lack of staff. She said, "Absolutely, I think it's a great idea. Just we don't necessarily have the manpower to do that. Parkhurst is short staffed as it is, so they're already giving a lot of resources to us [Harvest] in terms of employees helping us and it might not be the most practical thing right now."

Hansen explained problems with composting rates in the dining halls and said he plans to oversee a return to scraping plates behind the conveyor belts by dining hall staff over students. After some construction a few years ago in Commons, he said, "they bumped the food scraping outside ultimately, to make everything work. We're going to flop it back around for the scraping, so students would just put their plate with their food waste on it so it goes back to a Parkhurst person who does the scraping." This plan's implementation would go hand in hand with the development of the liquid biodigester, he said, "Our vision with this is that we put a second liquid biodigester right at the scraping lines …We're just not there yet. We're trying to make sure the liquid bio digester system works."

Despite the hard work of Hamilton Sustainability Coordinators and the Sustainability Working Group, making the whole Hamilton community on par with their efforts is challenging. Changing campus culture's attitude around waste and recycling will require intervention on multiple fronts.

Hansen cited Hamilton's lack of self-service model for students as a contributing factor for wastefulness. A self-service model puts the responsibility of each student's waste in their own hands. This is different from Hamilton student's reliant model on Facilities Management because as Hansen said, "It's full service. It's custodians moving people's waste." If students bore the daily responsibility of disposing of their own trash and recycling outside, according to Hansen, they may be more mindful of the waste they generate.

Karr cited a lack of campus unity around sustainability and limiting waste. She said, "I don't feel like the campus mentality is very environmentally inclined, which it kind of needs to be." On a campus in which students already have many different responsibilities, managing their individual waste is not a priority. Karr said, "We're so used to being, go, go, go, like, take a cup to go because I need to be on the run walking to my class with a cup of coffee. But, we just have to think about certain aspects of our life that need to be slowed down and thought about exactly because the world can't keep up with the way we're doing."

One of the most difficult challenges, according to Hansen, is how to, "get a community of 1800 students and 800 employees marching to the same drumbeat." This unity is necessary in Hansen's mind because, as he said, "you could have 30 people throwing paper and containers into the recycling container and one person comes in and throws a half-drunk coffee cup and it ruins all the efforts of everyone before it." Although OHSWA has careful sorting equipment, Hansen said, "OHSWA reserves the right to reject loads of co-mingled waste."

Hansen said, "The impetus has to be on those who are generating the waste, [they must] try to act in an appropriate way so it doesn't contaminate the things downstream." Hansen believes that "students have to be the primary audience," simply because they are the largest demographic of people both generating waste and disposing of it.

Although student efforts towards waste management need to improve, it is difficult to decide what responsibility must be put on individual habits or regulations from above. Karr said, "What I struggle with is that I hate when the students are

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATIE ROCKFORD '24

The Harvest Wednesday lunch crew works to package lots of leftover food at Commons.

blamed because I'm a student, and I want to give us agency because we are adults. And I want us to be able to make decisions about what we do with our waste, right?" Despite this, she thinks intervention by the College itself is needed to counter lack of campus motivation around sustainability.

Because of Hamilton students' tendencies to use single-use cups from the dining halls, Karr said, "It might come down to Hamilton, as an institution, limiting us and just not giving us the option [for disposable cups], which is sad because that treats us like children, but it could really limit the waste that we are producing." Considering, according to Hansen, that Hamilton through Parkhurst spends almost $6,000 every week on purchasing single-use non-recyclable cups alone (or $204,000 over two semesters), Karr suggests that Hamilton as an institution may be responsible for reducing waste as they spend an immense amount of money on single-use products. With all Howard Diner meals and Little Pub's lunches being served with single-use plates and utensils, Hamilton does not always give students options to be sustainable.

"It might come down to Hamilton, as an institution, limiting us and just not giving us the option [for disposable cups], which is sad because that treats us like children, but it could really limit the waste that we are producing." - Willa Karr '25

The school's decision to eliminate trays from the dining halls many years ago to manage food waste, according to Hansen, was effective. He said, "[Students] liked those trays, but that was a principal portion control strategy, which is now just how we do things. Because what would happen to you to have your big tray [with] two plates of fries, pizza, salad, whatever… And so that helps limit food waste."

Sangree agrees that depending on students' individual behavior will not necessarily be effective. "I am a little bit uneasy addressing the personal responsibility question of students because I think students already have a lot to think about. And I think that a strategy that places the responsibility on students is not, at its core, a very strong strategy," she said, adding that, "I think that you can't really rely on people to make the right decision. But it may be that kind of a pessimistic view, but I think it makes sense given the million other things that students are doing."

Sangree is instead focusing her efforts with HSC on working on easy signage for everyone to follow while sorting their waste and working with different departments around campus. She said, "you want to make the thinking on the part of students and people who are throwing things away as simple as possible. So having the signs be perfectly aligned to the kind of waste we actually encounter. Having the Fojo cup that is in your hand match the photo of the sign next to the waste bin is the most effective strategy."

Sanges echoed a need for greater signage in the dining halls because of food waste coming off students' plates. She said, "So it's one thing for there to be a lot of food waste at the serving line, but there's also a huge issue with the main dining hall where people are throwing away a ton of food at the end of meals." Sanges has noticed, "It's not necessarily all being composted, because people contaminate the compost with plastic cups, napkins, wrappers, whatever, so most of the compost is just contaminated with garbage and then you can't actually compost it. Not a lot is actually composted."

November 30, 2023

Dear Hamilton Community,

Welcome back everyone! We hope you had a restful and restorative Thanksgiving break. As we make our final push to finish out this semester, there are many events happening on campus to keep us busy.

Tonight, there will be an SGA Presidential Q&A with the incoming Student Body President and Vice President moderated by the editors-in-chief of *The Spectator*. On Dec. 4, community members are invited to attend a Common Ground event at 7:30 p.m. in the chapel. Former U.S. Representative Val Demings and former U.S. Senator Roy Blunt will engage in a discussion on polarization within the House and the Senate moderated by Steve Scully, Senior Vice President of Communications at the Bipartisan Policy Center.

Winter sports are in full swing. On Friday Dec. 1, Women's hockey takes on Trinity at the Sage Rink at 7:00 p.m. This Saturday Dec. 2, we have Between Friends coming to perform our fall concert. The concert begins at 8:00 p.m. Bring your hill card!

Our podcasts are here! *Search History* is hosted by Stella O'Brien '24 and Hannah Jablons '24, where our hosts dive into the quirky corners of their curious minds. The Arts & Entertainment podcast, hosted by Max Bratter '25 and Allen Underwood '25, spotlights up-and-coming artists and comments on today's music scene. Check out the QR codes below to listen!

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The Spectator

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Celebrating 157 years,
we *were first published as* The Hamilton Campus *in 1866.*

The Spectator's Letter to the Editor section is designed to be a forum for the entire Hamilton community to discuss and debate campus, local, national, and global issues. Pieces published in the section express the opinion of the individual writers and are not necessarily the opinions of *The Spectator*, its editors or the Media Board.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college, and Hamilton community members.

The Spectator has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. *The Spectator* reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.

About Us

The Hamilton College Spectator, *publication number USPS 612-840, is published weekly by the Hamilton College Student Media Board while classes are in session. For more information e-mail spec@hamilton.edu. Our offices are located on the second floor of the Sadove Student Center. The deadline for advertisements is Monday the week of publication. For further information, please e-mail specads@hamilton.edu.*

Student Activities and campus organizations host the 6th Annual Lighting of Our Village

by Catherine Vogt '24
STAFF WRITER

Sadove Student Center and the Sadove Terrace were lit up by hundreds of twinkling lights as students, faculty, staff and Hamilton community members gathered for the 6th annual Lighting of Our Village held on Wednesday, Nov. 29.

The Lighting of Our Village, hosted by the Student Activities Office, aims to create a greater sense of community on campus around the time of finals, cold weather and shorter days. Student Activities Director Ariel Adams remarked that the physical lighting of our campus is meant to serve as the "many meanings of light, including as a symbol of hope and warmth." Promotional materials for the event explained that the organizers "hope to bring light to campus as the colder, darker winter season approaches."

There were a variety of speakers at the event, including Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Sean Bennett; Ariel Adams; representatives from Chabad Student Group, Hamilton Christian Fellowship, Hillel and Meditation Club; and the Shenandoah Kirkland Initiative. Acapella groups Tumbling After, The Buffers and Special K also performed.

"The lighting of the village is an opportunity for our community to be together and embrace our connectivity. Mindfulness and meditation teaches us to tune into the present and recognize those connections fundamental to us. Meditation Club is excited to be a part of the lighting," said Co-Leader of Hamilton's Meditation Club Carlos Pichardo '25.

The Presidents of Hamilton Hillel and the Chabad Student Group presented remarks together that explained the significance of light in Hanukkah celebrations.

Luke Hayes '25, co-president of the Chabad Student Group, shared that "Chabad is really excited to be involved in this year's village lighting. Chabad is grateful to be a part of the Hamilton community, and our participation in this annual event demonstrates our commitment to spreading light to those around us. We wish the Hamilton community a peaceful and joyful holiday season."

Additionally, Sadove Support Staff, Sadove Programming, First Year Experience (FYE), Soul Food, Class of 2024, Class of 2025, Class of 2026 and Class of 2027 participated in the event. Students could go inside the Sadove Student Center where organiztions gave out hot chocolate, a variety of sweet treats and swag.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANOUSHKA ASWIN '25 AND ERIC MOSS '24

Students gather for the Lighting of Our Village.

Campus Safety Incident Report

In an effort to respect discretion, *The Spectator* and Campus Safety have not disclosed the idenities of the students involved in these reports.

Friday, Nov. 24

4:27 p.m. Complaint—South Residence Hall

Saturday, Nov. 25

11:53 a.m. Trouble Alarm—Anderson-Connell Alumni Center

12:05 p.m. Assist—North Campus

Sunday, Nov. 26

3:40 p.m. Motorist Assist—Eels House

Monday, Nov. 27

12:44 p.m. Fire Alarm—Milbank Residence Hall

6:47 p.m. Fire Alarm—Burke Library

10:08 p.m. Medical Emergency—South Campus

Tuesday, Nov. 28

9:28 p.m. Trouble Alarm—Dunham Residence Hall

9:51 p.m. Animal Complaint—North Campus

Wednesday, Nov. 29

12:20 a.m. Noise Complaint—North Campus

Students can now apply to be EMTs, applicants are warned the job "won't always be easy"

by Ava Cargan '27
STAFF WRITER

First-Years and sophomores can now apply to be part of the on-campus Emergency Medical Service Agency, a program that has been around for nearly 25 years. During an information session on Tuesday Nov. 28, attendees were told the role "won't always be easy."

The emergency medical services on-campus provide care to anyone who is in the campus bubble including faculty, staff, students, visiting parents and more. They work closely with campus safety. When emergencies are called in, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) respond alongside campus safety, transporting life support equipment and providing crowd and scene control. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on campus follows all of the basic life support protocols in place from New York State. On campus, they work closely with medical control and, if necessary, transfer students via ambulance to Wynn hospital, which recently opened in Utica after a grant from New York State. the duration of time they are on call. They are permitted to attend classes and participate in sports, but must leave to respond to all calls. EMTs cannot live in Rogers Estate due to the distance from campus, and if they live in a Griffin Road apartment they must have a vehicle available. Anything that happens during a response is confidential and EMTs are bound to HIPPA laws, which makes it illegal for them to share details of the emergency. If an EMT shares info for a call that they were on they can be dismissed from the program, and possibly prosecuted legally.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHIANG O'BRIEN ARCHITECTS

Hamilton's EMTs are one of the many health and wellness resources available to students. Students who are experiencing non-emergency health issues can visit the Health Center.

Students who are selected to be EMTs are required to take a training course over the summer and get certified in New York State. They also need to be CPR certified and maintain the certification, take mass casualty courses and complete training in blood pathogen exposure. EMT training is intended to prepare students to respond to emergency calls at any time.

The EMT role is an unpaid volunteer position that carries strict responsibility. While on call, EMTs are not allowed to be intoxicated, drink alcohol or engage with drugs. An EMT also cannot leave campus for

The selection process is competitive, and EMT membership is limited to 25-30 students. The selection process includes attendance at mandatory meetings, an application, a personal and academic recommendation and group interviews. After acceptance into the program, the school provides student EMTs with their uniforms and equipment which includes branded shirts, jackets, an orange bag and personal protective equipment.

The program requires at least four semesters of participation. Students also work on campus for more than the standard semester; they arrive early in August and in January and they remain on campus until after Commencement in the spring. These scheduling requirements prohibit EMTs from serving as an orientation leader or a Community Advisor during their first year as an EMT. Students who volunteer for the program can potentially study abroad, but the semesters they are permitted to do so is limited. If a student is accept-ed during their first year, they are told whichsemester they can study abroad. However, if a student is accepted during their sophomore year, they will not have an excused semester for study abroad.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Students can recognize on-call EMTs by the dark blue uniforms or bright equipment bags.

The EMT program on campus is competitive, and students who are accepted play an active role in campus safety. Those who are EMTs undergo intensive training so that they are prepared to answer any type of call, which includes regular quizzes to maintain their knowledge. The emergency medical services on campus are available 24/7 during the semester, and are closed on all breaks.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OF MOHAWK VALLEY HEALTH SYSTEMS

If the student EMTs on call determine that a student requires medical care at a hospital, they will then work with medical control in order to successfully transport that student to nearby Wynn Hospital, which recently opened in downtown Utica.

ROOTS students attend prestigious national conference in Arizona

by Yuxuan Xu ’26
FEATURES CONTRIBUTOR

From Nov. 16 through Nov. 19, 15 Hamilton students, along with faculty advisor Professor Max Majirek, traveled to Phoenix, AZ to participate in the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Students (ABRCMS). This prestigious conference aims to promote diversity in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and brings students, faculty and researchers from across the U.S. together. This year, the conference registered a record attendance of more than 5,600 attendees.
Hamilton students have been attending ABRCMS since 2019. That year, Professor Todd Franklin, interested in lower barriers for minoritized students in STEM, developed an opportunity for five students to attend ABRCMS. Their incredible experience led to the creation of the ROOTS society of students of color in STEM, which has since coordinated the ABRCMS program for students at Hamilton.

The conference presented an invaluable opportunity for students to develop their professional skills, learn about the latest developments in STEM fields and network with future mentors and employers. Eleven Hamilton students presented their summer researchat the poster session in the fields of neuroscience, cell biology, developmental genetics, chemistry and social science. This exciting opportunity to present in front of a national audience developed the students’ scientific communication skills and allowed them to connect with professionals in their field of interest. Furthermore, ABRCMS hosted a series of professional development sessions. Topics for workshops ranged from applying to graduate programs to developing a personal brand, promoting self-advocacy and maximizing equity in a post-SCOTUS landscape. Students gained valuable insights and connections that helped solidify their professional aspirations.

A variety of presentations from leading scientific experts also inspired students. There was an impressive list of big-name speakers, including Eddie Npodu, disability activist and a global ambassador for the UN sustainable development goals; Dr. Juanita Merchant, the African-American to obtain an MD-PhD from the Yale school of Medicine; and Dr. Carlos Bustamente, the CEO of Galatea Bio, one of the biggest biobanks in the world. In addition, there was a wide selection of scientific expert lectures for students to attend, which allowed them to learn about cutting-edge research currently being conducted by researchers of color. What students appreciated the most was that despite the extraordinary success that these trailblazers had achieved, all were happy to interact with students on a personal level. For example, Edwin Mensah-Boateng ’25 stated that, “At a talk, I networked with Dr. Nyasha Chambwe, who researches disparities between races in cancer biology. This fascinated me as a someone who is passionate about epidemiology. She happens to do research at Northwell hospital near where I am from, so I will continue connecting with her to find out about opportunities in her lab.”

Finally, the conference also featured an exhibitor hall with more than 500 booths from the top graduate schools, medical schools, and companies in biomedical research. Here, students were able to network with prospective mentors and employers, learn about different programs and industries and pick up fee waivers for applications. In addition to their newfound knowledge and connections, students also picked up an abundance of free merch that was offered at the booths.

Hamilton achieved impressive success at this national conference. Four students—Michelle Zheng ’24, Bri Padilla ’25, Elise Kwon ’26, and Yuxuan Xu ’26—won a full travel award from the ABRCMS committee, meaning that their travel, accommodation and conference registration fees were fully paid for by the conference. Moreover, at the awards banquet, Naima Atker ’24, Mimosa Van ’26 and Prim Udomphan ’26 received recognition for their outstanding poster presentations. Outside of their scientific and professional endeavors, Hamilton students enjoyed exploring Phoenix, AZ. In the 80 degree weather, a welcome change from the Hamilton cold, they hiked a desert trail, relaxed at a Japanese friendship garden, impressed everyone with their moves at the closing dance social.

Overall, ABRCMS 2023 was a resounding success for Hamilton. Special acknowledgement should be given to the Co-Chairs of ROOTS—Sarah John ’24, Tam Ha ’24, Prim Udomphan ’26, and Elise Kwon ’26—and Professor Majirek for organizing this incredible opportunity for marginalized students at Hamilton. ABRCMS 2024 will be occurring in Pittsburgh, PA, where ROOTS is excited to continue this legacy of excellence for Hamilton students of color in STEM.

PHOTO COURTESY OF YUXUAN XU '26

Students who attended the conference pose in front of the convention center where ABRCMS was held.

PHOTO COURTESY OF YUXUAN XU '26

Outside of the conference setting, students were able to enjoy Arizona's much warmer weather and various public parks.

Recently Published Alumni Books

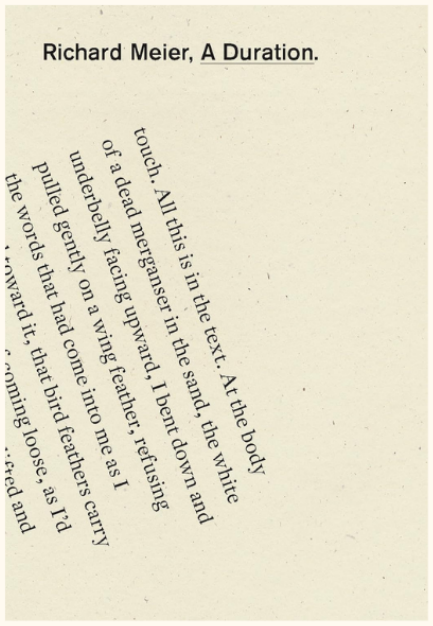
By Mikaella Tortusa '25

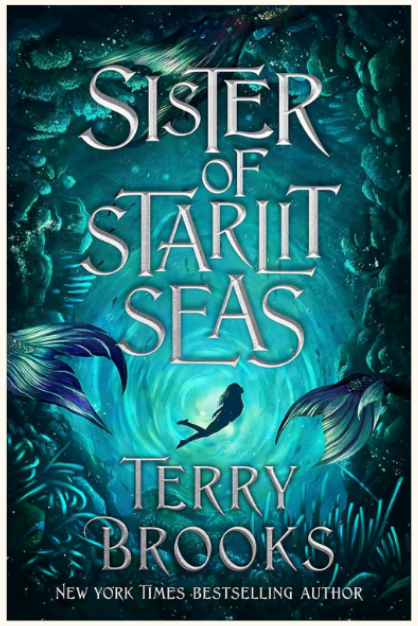
Since many Hamilton students have gone on to publish various works, this *Spectator* spread will hopefully encourage you to read some of the books recently written by our alumni! Listed below is a mixture of fantasy, mystery, poetry and non-fiction. Furthermore, many of these book descriptions come from the publishers themselves. If you are feeling stressed while studying for exams, try relaxing with one of these books. And after exams, there is no better time to settle down with a book than Winter Break!

A Duration by Richard Meier '88

Poetry

Published by Waves Books in Seattle, *A Duration* is Meier's fifth work of poetry. This work illustrates how "writing is a physical act where writing and lived experience support one another in bodies—animal, plant, mineral, and word bodies—that are injured and heal, that die and continue in new forms, playing new roles." Five of the long poems in this book follow the same form where a prose stanza breaks mid-sentence then syntactically finished in the next stanza. This break creates momentary confusion but ever-lasting delight, as if resembling the way one rambles to a friend.





Sister of Starlit Seas by Terry Brooks '66

Fiction

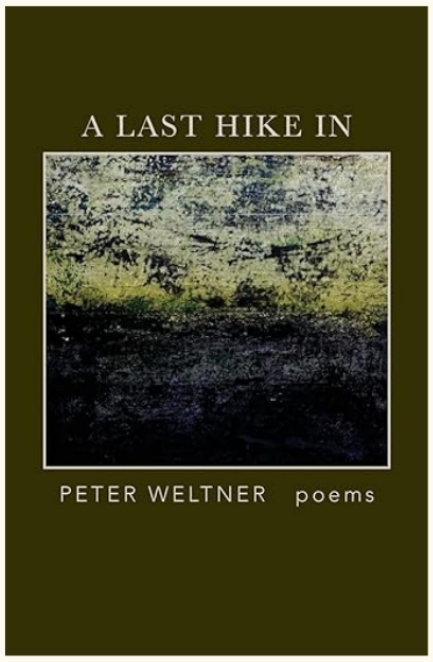
Sister of Starlight Seas is the third novel of an epic fantasy series set in the world of Viridian Deep. In it, a rebellious young heroine named Char begins a voyage of self-discovery. Char believes that her headstrong, impulsive behavior (a quality seen as her greatest weakness by her family), is actually her greatest strength. She has the willingness to instantly brave danger and leap to the rescue when anyone she loves is threatened.

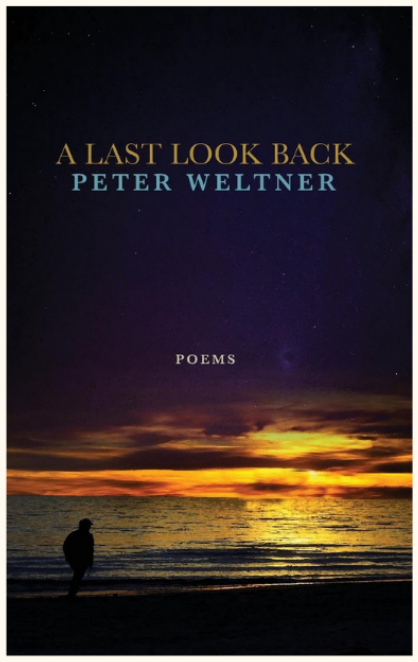
A month before she turns fifteen, Char runs away and joins a pirate crew. Then, three years into her pirate career, her captain—the man she is convinced she loves—is captured by the leaders of the slave traders he has been fighting. When Char leaps in to rescue him, she finds herself thrust into an adventure that will uncover secrets she never suspected about herself, one that will maybe, finally, teach her to look before she leaps.

A Last Hike In & A Last Look Back by Peter Weltner '64

Poetry

Weltner offers his poetry in two parts in his most recent and perhaps final books of poetry. The publisher, Marrowstone Press, states, "both books are about trekking into what Keats called 'the old oak Forest' while recalling earlier and similar journeys, real and imaginary, the poet has made before. In both books, Peter Weltner continues to explore how images from the past, of place, and of passion, recurrently rhyme with the present."

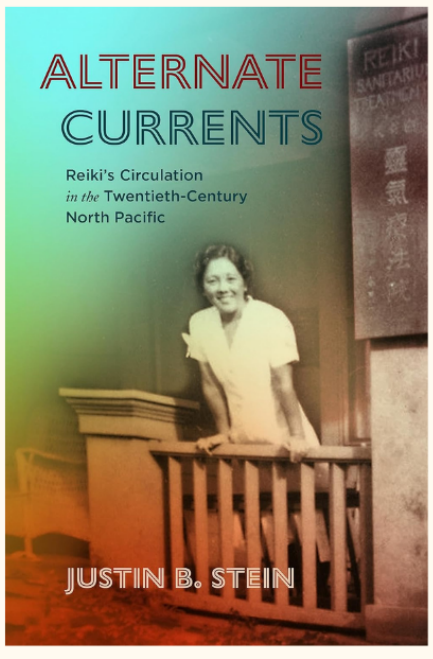


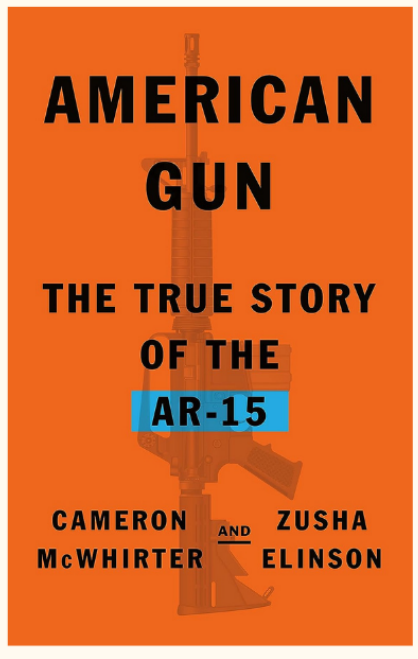


Alternate Currents: Reiki's Circulation in the Twentieth-Century North Pacific by Justin B. Stein '01

Non-fiction

In this book, Stein '01 analyzes how the Japanese American woman Hawayo Takata spearheaded the international rise and development of Reiki: an obscure Japanese therapy where practioners channel a cosmic energy called Reiki to heal their body, mind and spirit. Stein examines how the relationships between healer and patient, master and disciple interwove with the values of the 20th century North Pacific and how they interplayed with Reiki's circulation, performance, and meanings.





American Gun: The True Story of the AR-15 by Cameron McWhirter '86 and Zusha Elinson

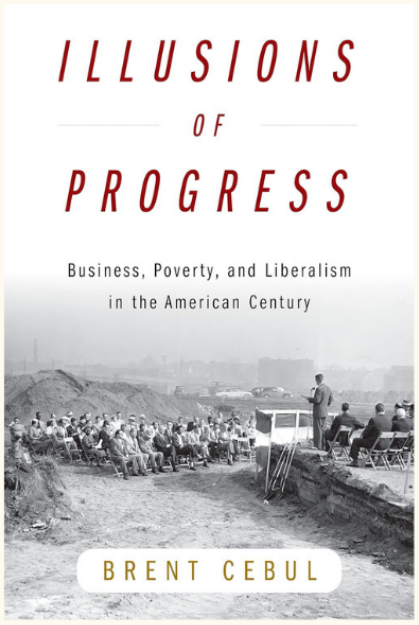
Non-fiction

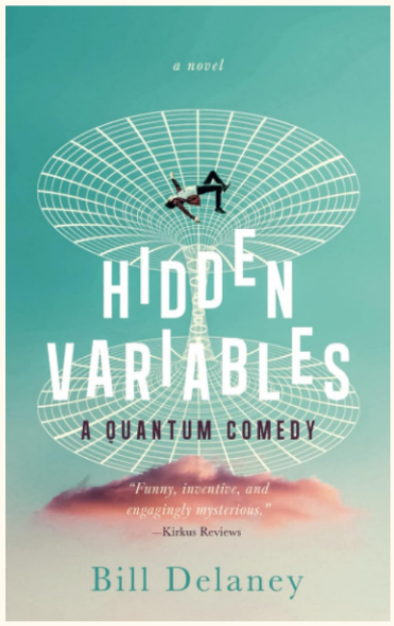
The authors tell the story of how an amateur gun designer pursuing a hobby in his garage would invent a rifle that has become what they call the "fulcrum of America's great gun divide." In the 1950s, Eugene Stoner created a lightweight, easy-to-use weapon for American soldiers and their allies during the Cold War: the AR-15 rifle. *American Gun* takes examines U.S. gun culture and reveals the appeal of the AR-15, the havoc it wreaks and the politics of reducing its influence.

***Illusions of Progress: Business, Poverty, and Liberalism in the American Century* by Brent Cebul '03**

Non-fiction

Published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, *Illusions of Progress* charts the history of public private growth and antipoverty partnerships since the New Deal. Cebul chronicles the rise of what he terms "supply-side liberalism," a powerful and enduring orientation toward politics and the economy, race and poverty, that united local chambers of commerce, liberal policymakers and economists, and urban and rural economic planners.





***Hidden Variables: A Quantum Comedy* by Bill Delaney '73**

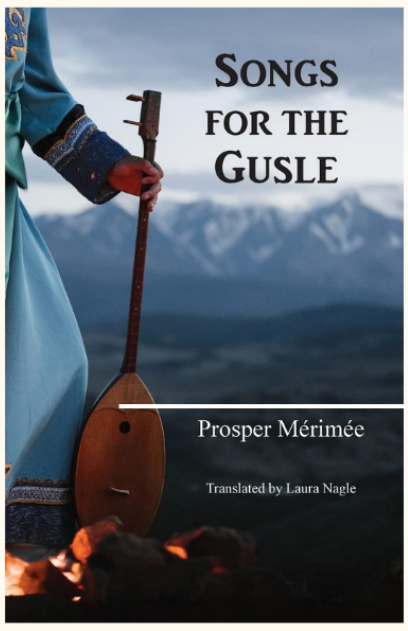
Fiction

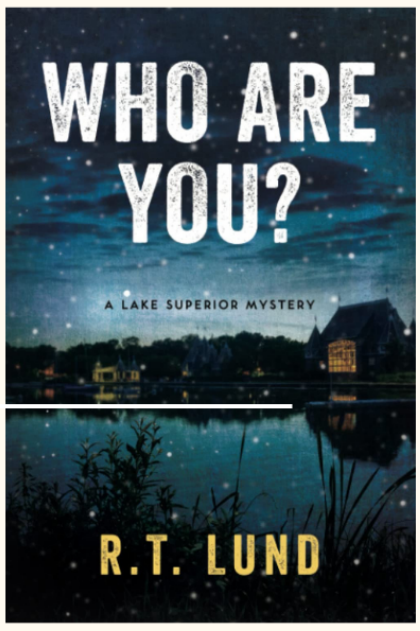
Delaney '73 spins a comedic, unique and metaphysical detective story about immortality, lousy jobs, murder and quantum physics. As failed TV reporter and self-declared private investigator Padraig O'Toole hunts down the killer of his (maybe) murdered brother-in-law. Kirkus Reviews writes that *Hidden variables* is "funny, inventive and engagingly mysterious. It's a heady, absurd parable about the dying towns, media conglomerates, and dead-end freelance work that make up so much of the American landscape. A cerebral and amusing novel that revolves around a quantum mystery."

***Songs for the Gusle by Prosper Mérimée* (translated by Laura Nagle '99)**

Fiction

Nagle '99 offers the first complete English-language translation of *La Guzla*. Originally published in 1827, *La Guzla* purported to be a collection of folktales, ballad lyrics and travel narratives compiled and translated into French by an anonymous traveler. In reality, the stories and their "translator" were the fictional accounts of a young civil servant named Prosper Mérimée. Along with footnotes explaining the historical and sociological context of the author's "discoveries," this new translation includes a translator's note by Nagle, who discusses the work's background and the challenges of translating it.





***Who Are You?: A Lake Superior Mystery* by R.T. Lund '77**

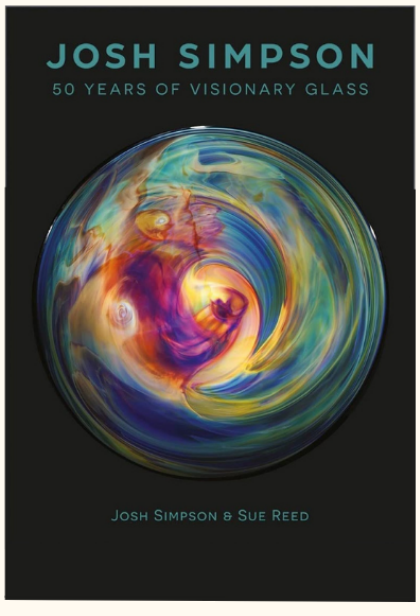
Fiction

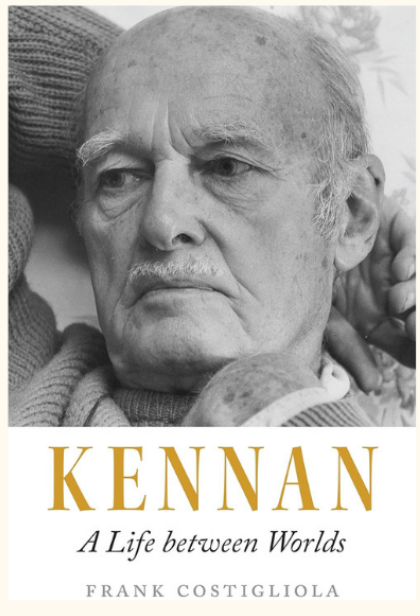
In Lund's '77 third novel, he weaves a tale of the events following the brutal murder of a local city councilwoman. Detective Lincoln Barnes and her partner, Warren, lead an investigation that focuses on the charismatic mayor and the victim's chief aide. Barnes' romantic encounter with a judge turns into an obsession after she discovers startling facts about his past. As Barnes and Warren close in on the killer, events occur that make her question her future as a cop and contemplate a new life with a man who's either the answer to her prayers or the personification of evil.

***Josh Simpson: 50 Years of Visionary Glass* by Josh Simpson '72 and Sue Reed**

Non-fiction

Through more than 550 beautiful photos and informative (and humorous) narration by the artist, this visual experience reveals the evolution of Simpson's '72 evocative glass art over the past 50 years. In-depth looks at his signature series and experimental works reveals how Simpson explored new ways to express his fascination with outer space, the natural world and the workings of the universe through glass. Text and and photo spreads narrate the story of Simpson's less well-known works, details of his life and process and his contributions within the craft world. Strategically placed comments from numerous museum curators, along with insights from astrophysicists and space flight professionals, present a unique perspective on the meanings and broad appeal of Simpson's glass.





***Kennan: A Life between Worlds* by Frank Costigliola '68**

Non-fiction

The diplomat and historian George F. Kennan (1904–2005) ranks as one of the most important figures in American foreign policy—and one of its most complex. Using previously untapped sources, Costigliola offers a new picture of a man of extraordinary ability and ambition whose idea of containing the Soviet Union helped ignite the Cold War but who spent the next half century trying to extinguish it. Always prescient, Kennan in the 1990s warned that the eastward expansion of NATO would spur a new cold war with Russia. An absorbing portrait of an eloquent, insightful, and sometimes blinkered iconoclast whose ideas are still powerfully relevant, *Kennan* invites us to imagine a world that Kennan fought for but was unable to bring about—one not of confrontations and crises but of dialogue and diplomacy.

If you are a turkey, the presidential pardon is the secret to a happy life

by Gregoire Winston '26
OPINION EDITOR

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACQUELYN MARTIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Turkeys Liberty and Bell enjoyed the luxurious Willard InterContinental Hotel prior to their presidential pardon.

What do Richard Nixon, Roger Stone, Bill Clinton and turkeys Peanut Butter and Jelly all have in common? They have been blessed by what is viewed as the President's most benevolent power; an act of grace solely dictated by the leader of our country's executive branch: the presidential pardon. Under Article II, Sec. II of the U.S. Constitution, the president is given the power to "grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States." In other words, presidential clemency safeguards any individual from serving time behind bars, absolves legal troubles and virtually guarantees reinsertion into society. For a turkey however, a pardon goes far beyond forgiving obstruction of justice, perjury and witness tampering—it is a matter of life or death.

This Thanksgiving, turkeys Liberty and Bell received the supreme blessing by President Biden. Rather than ending up on a dinner table, these privileged birds lived to see another day. How did Liberty and Bell escape the jaws of hungry Americans, in a country that consumes over 46 million turkeys a year? How long has this strange tradition been in effect, and why would presidents want to salvage two turkeys from the precipice of certain death?

Historical accounts debate over when official presidential turkey pardons truly began, but the oldest recorded tradition dates back to 1863 under President Lincoln. Prior, the White House held close ties with the turkey lobby, who provided the birds as a staple of thanksgiving celebration. Tad Lincoln, the son of President Lincoln, begged his father to spare the turkey he considered as a dear pet. Before Lincoln, no President had formally excused a turkey from the thanksgiving table, preferring to eat it with a generous dose of cranberry sauce, stuffing and mashed potatoes. A century later, President John F. Kennedy used his gifted turkey as a political move given the circumstances of the situation. Preferring to be seen as a turkey liberator rather than a turkey executioner, sparing the bird painted Kennedy in a more positive light, famously stating "let's keep him going." From George H.W. Bush onwards, presidential turkey pardons have been commonplace as part of a U.S. President's thanksgiving routine. Today, the bond between the White House and National Turkey Federation remains strong.

In preparation for their presidential pardon, turkeys Liberty and Bell rode from their farm in Minnesota to Washington D.C. in a black stretch Cadillac Escalade. Their personal chauffeur is described as a "seasoned individual in turkey-handling matters" according to Steve Lykken, National Turkey Federation president, guaranteeing the utmost comfort. Once in our nation's capital, Liberty and Bell arrived on a red carpet and checked into the luxurious Willard InterContinental Hotel, located steps away from the White House, before indulging in a well-deserved bubble bath while sipping on refreshments from the suite's minibar. The turkeys then participated in a news conference where their names were formally unveiled to the public, drawing crowds of reporters from Washington and beyond. To close off the night, Lykken riled up the crowd when he announced that the birds were "absolutely ready for prime time."

On D-Day, Liberty and Bell made their way to the White House South Lawn alongside the most powerful executives of the National Turkey Federation. President Biden and his cabinet welcomed esteemed guests and initiated the ceremony in high spirits. Following his opening remarks, Biden made his way to the ornamented table adjacent to the podium and blessed Liberty. Bell, on the other hand, enjoyed the temperate fall weather squawking through the grass behind the podium. Biden proclaimed: "That's a big bird, man. I'm impressed. I hereby pardon Liberty and Bell. Congratulations, birds!" Thanks to this moment in the spotlight, these lucky birds' lives were changed forever. The 2023 presidential turkey pardon concluded, and the fowls made their way back to Minnesota, alive and well. Today, Liberty and Bell enjoy retirement at the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Sciences.

Behind the plethora of dad jokes and ceremonious decor, the presidential turkey pardon hides a beloved American tradition that has spanned decades. While Americans gobble millions of turkeys on Thanksgiving Day, a single Presidential blessing can certainly be life changing. For the sake of all turkeys reading this, keep your ears open: the pardon could be a one-way ticket to a life of luxury, comfort and endless pleasure. Life is certainly good when you are a turkey—well, a presidential one.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

In 2022, president Biden gave Chocolate, the pardoned turkey that year, the chance to express his thoughts on what Thanksgiving meant to him; he declined to answer.

November 30, 2023

Tom Brady is right to claim that the current NFL contains "mediocrity"

by Pat Cleary '24
STAFF WRITER

Earlier this week, Former NFL quarterback Tom Brady appeared on Stephen A. Smith's podcast. In the interview, Brady called out the state of the league saying, "there's a lot of mediocrity in today's NFL.

"He's not wrong. 12 weeks into the season we still do nothave a true contender. Every team seems to have some hole, even perennial favorites like the Chiefs and Bills. The 10-1 Eagles lost to the pitiful Jets. Brady went on to blame the lack of pregame preparation and lack of effort to avoid injury amongst current players. Is this true? Is this just another case of an older athlete resenting the young? What's changed, and why is the NFL so weird this season?

There are some causes that are easy to spot. The expansion to 17 games and 14 playoff spots clearly devalue the regular season. However, the real reason this season feels so off has to do with three things: rule changes, the CBA and the quarterback.

Firstly, the past decade has seen various changes meant to ensure greater player safety following lawsuits and research over concussions. Referees are stricter regarding hits to the quarterback and lowering the head before hitting another player. There's nothing wrong with safety. However, anytime you change a system, you incentivize players to change behaviors. This is something Brady talked about with Smith. He would not throw to parts of the field because he knew doing so jeopardized a big hit on one of his receivers. The threat of danger made him play smarter and safer. That kind of thought process is out the window now, and so we have a league of players playing with less fear and therefore playing more dangerously. How else have the rules created riskier behavior?

In the 2021 CBA, the number of padded practices in training camp was reduced from 28 to 16. This is a critical issue in negotiations because more of these practices increases the risk of injury before games are even played. Before the 2011 agreement, teams had no limits and even held infamous "two-a-day" practices. While this move is (seemingly) good for player health, it has come at the expense of offensive line play. Quarterbacks can throw to their receivers in t-shirts and shorts, kickers can practice field goals anytime they want but the offensive line is different. It is a position defined by giving and receiving big hits. Reducing their ability to practice and build chemistry as a unit impedes their ability to develop. It is no wonder why teams with older offensive lines like the Eagles and Lions are among the league's elite units. Worse line play severely affects the sport's most important position: quarterback.

Finally, as the quarterback has become more central to the offense, it's made not having or losing an elite passer all the more dire. This has led to the explosion of salaries with players like Joe Burrow and Patrick Mahomes set to earn as much as a quarter of the salary cap on a 55 man roster. It means that once a quarterback is off his rookie deal, his team cannot supply him with as many elite pass catchers, linemen and defenders. It is why Tyreek Hill jumped ship for the Dolphins after the Chiefs signed Mahomes to a historic 10 year $503 million extension. Most elite quarterbacks are now on big budget extensions and are surrounded with worse pieces. The exceptions are the over-performing Bengals, Eagles and Dolphins, but they will all soon be forced to pay or previously signed extensions will begin kicking in. In the modern NFL, it seems you can have a good quarterback or a good roster and never both.

At the same time, worsening offensive line play has incentivized quarterbacks to run more. It is why we see more short quarterbacks like Kyler Murray and Russell Wilson and fewer pocket passing tanks like Peyton Manning and Philip Rivers of yesteryear. It has created faster, more dynamic offenses, as every skill position represents a scoring threat. Still, this innovation does not come without consequences. Because we have incentivized quarterbacks to take greater risks, they are more likely to become injured. Already, Joe Burrow, Daniel Jones, Aaron Rodgers, Deshaun Watson, Anthony Richardson and Kirk Cousins have been knocked out for the year. It is because we increasingly ask quarterbacks to play more dangerously behind ill-prepared linemen. The end result is a lot of bad injuries and a lot of bad backups taking snaps.

At the end of the day, none of this should surprise us. The league is working as it was designed. The reason the NFL dominates is that, on any given Sunday, any team can beat any other. That kind of parity makes long term success unsustainable and why dynasties like Brady's Patriots are so rare. Still, as the league looks to change rules to increase revenue with games abroad or expanding the season, it threatens the league's core product. If the NFL becomes a league of backup quarterbacks running for their lives, the product will suffer. Audiences are never guaranteed. If you don't believe me try to ask a baseball fan.

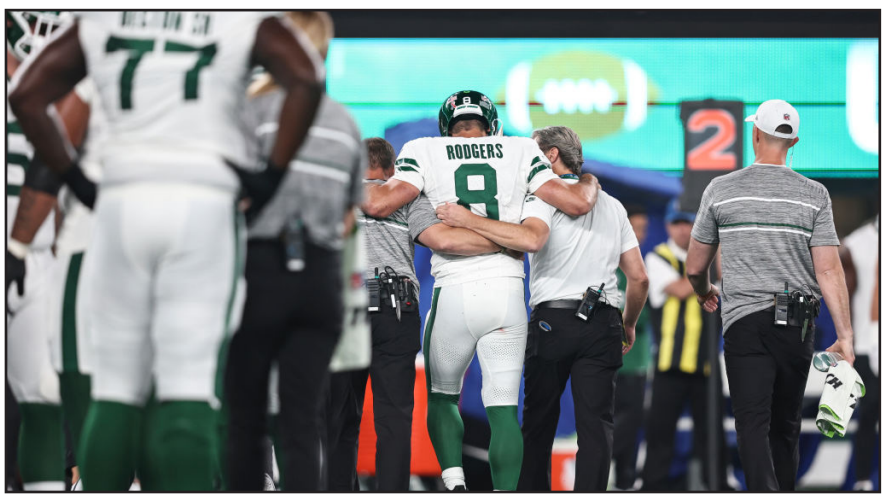


PHOTO COURTESY OF OUTKICK

New York Jets Quarterback Aaron Rodgers suffered an achilles injury on his fourth play of the season.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPORTING NEWS

Former NFL Quarterback Tom Brady spoke to ESPN's Stephen A. Smith about the current state of the NFL.

Art dealers, art markets and *The Price of Everything*

by Gregory Parizhsky '26
A&E CONTRIBUTOR

Contemporary art is a contentious topic, primarily when the question of price is raised. It is often hard to imagine that the money being spent on pictures is an actual representation of a consensus on what art is deemed valuable and what art is not. The movie The Price of Everything (2018), directed by Nathaniel Kahn, addresses buyers, sellers and artists in the contemporary art market. The movie's title stems from the prominent art collector Stefan Edlis, who said that "There are people that know the price of everything but the value of nothing." Stefan believes that the art he collects is meaningful and worth its market price, unlike collectors like the Mugrabi family, who went unmentioned in the movie but have gained prominence with their collection of over a thousand Warhols and their monopolistic mentality of being so-called 'market makers.'

The origins of the prices that paintings now fetch can be traced to the early 1900s and are tied to Joseph Duveen, a man coveted as the most significant art dealer of all time, who, believing American industrial titans needed art, culture and a way to spend their money, began
personally outbidding old master paintings by
hundreds of thousands of dollars at auctions to raise their social status. He enticed his clients to compete with each other to cultivate an expensive art collection that could one day immortalize their names in the world of art.

By the late 1900s, the old masters that seemed endless suddenly became finite, and the art market needed new art and artists to entice spending and, more bluntly, keep art a valuable asset.

The movie follows the evasive Larry Poons and the highest-selling living artist of all time, Jeff Koons. The two artists offer diametrically opposing views of the exploitative art market that demands homogeneity.

Poons entered the scene with minimalist monochromatic paintings adorned with dots and shapes floating in an ocean of color. Larry, aging and hobbling through the foggy woods of his upstate New York studio, reminisces on the detrimental expectations of him to continue painting in that same style that he initially exhibited. Rejecting monetary gain to emphasize the integrity of his artwork and wanting to explore the gamut of his ability, Larry surreptitiously vanished from the art scene. His choice to explore different styles led to the abeyance of his name.

In contrast, Koons can be regarded as a conforming, evidently commercial artist; his reflective balloon sculptures appear in various spaces, ranging from lobbies to private collections. Koons brings in money from completed works and through the pre-order of future works. He blurs the line between art as a commercial entity and art as an intrinsically beautiful and necessary existence.

Artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby, who appears in the movie, watches her artwork, which she once sold for under $100,000, sell for close to a million dollars at an auction at Sothebys. The camera zooms in on her face, and the interviewer asks, "doesn't the price pressure affect your output?" With a smile, Crosby retaliates by claiming that her artwork is an expression of herself, and whether it sells or not is a market decision; the work should not derive meaning from its price but from its intrinsic value.

The price of contemporary artworks is contingent on several factors, including resale and speculation, which can harm the artist and create unrealistic expectations. The secondary market drives prices up and allows billionaires to write off their expenses on art. Many artworks sit in tax-free ports and never see the light of day. The reality of the art dealership world falls upon the fact that artists have become brand names and their works capitalistically objectified.

The movie asks the watcher whether art has intrinsic value or merely derives significance from the monetary figure assigned to its brush strokes. Can the price and artist's name be separated from the work? Often, wanderers of museums will gravitate towards works of the great artists of our time, yet they may find another lesser-known artist more interesting. It is hard to blame capitalism and the art market for current prices, as patronage and price have been entrenched in art-making since its inception.

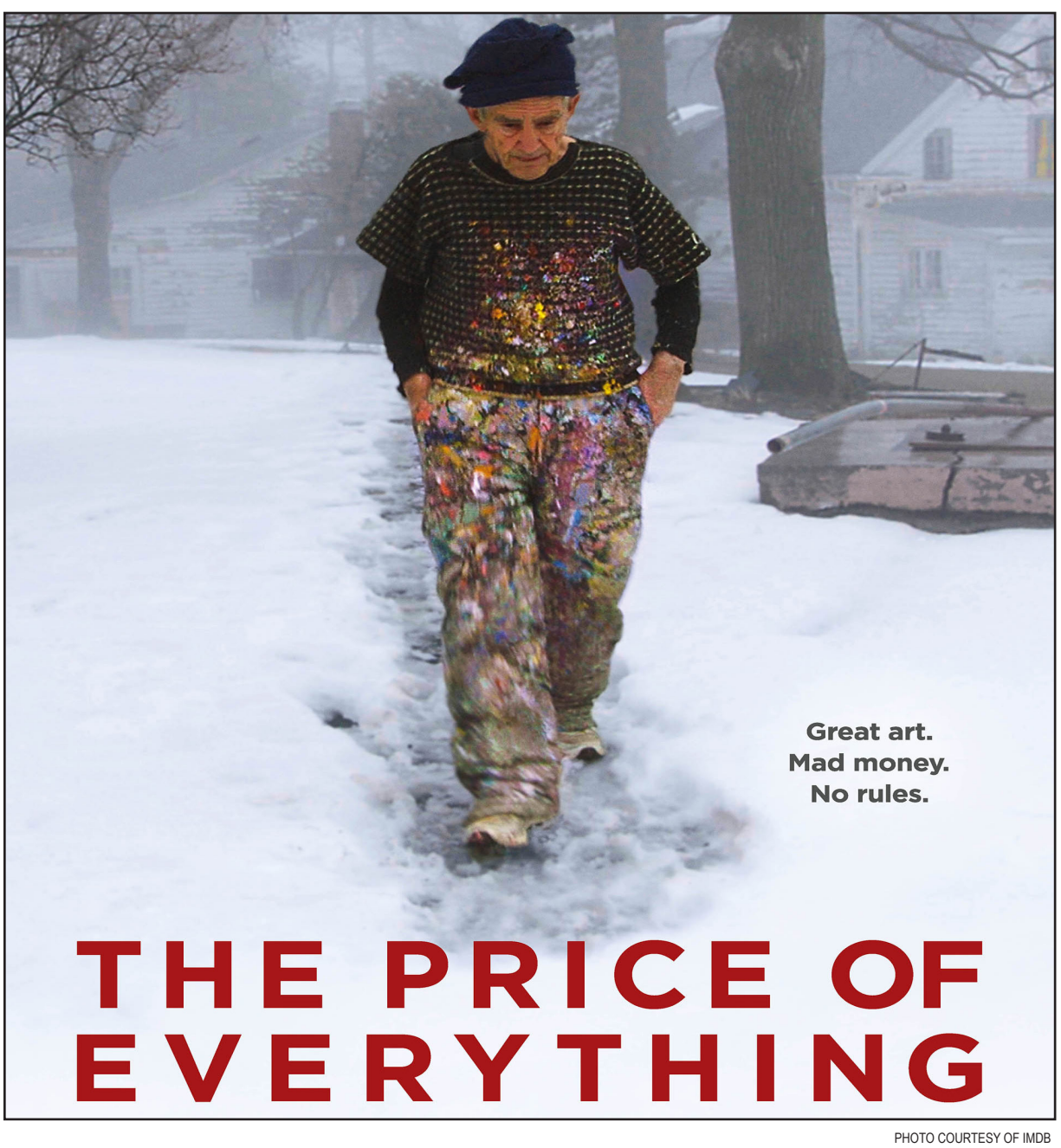


PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

The Price of Everything was produced and distributed by HBO in 2018.

November 30, 2023

Film review: hold out for *The Holdovers* (2023)

by Lucy Leness '26
A&E CONTRIBUTOR

With The Holdovers (2023), director Alexander Payne delivers a well-timed reminder that family can arise from unexpected places. Set in the early 1970s, the comedic drama begins on the cusp of winter break at a snow-covered, all-boys, New England boarding school, Barton Academy. When the clamor of buses and station wagons has died away, all that remain are the Holdovers: those individuals who have remained on campus after every other student and faculty member has departed for the holidays. Barton's hallowed halls brim with tradition and a substantial amount of entitlement, which is noted by Paul Hunham (Paul Giamatti). Despite their lackluster performances, his Ancient Civilizations students are itching to escape Hunham's grasp, including one Angus Tully (Dominic Sessa). Angus, anxious to depart school and meet his family in St. Kitts, soon receives a phone call from his mother. He'll be spending Christmas on campus while she jets off on her honeymoon with his new stepfather.

Angus joins the four other Holdovers under Hunham's militant supervision. From his obnoxious dorm mate Teddy Kountze (Brady Hepner) to a gentle quarterback-turned-activist Jason Smith (Michael Provost), Angus's sarcastic wit is joined by a myriad of other Barton characters. An unlikely band stuck together for various reasons, the Holdovers seem to lay the perfect foundation for a classic, coming-of-age, Breakfast-Club-esque story. Yet Angus is left behind once again, as the four other boys depart not long into the movie. Jason's father descends to whisk the boys away to their family ski house, and Angus's mother doesn't answer the phone to grant her son permission to leave.

The exit of the greater ensemble only centers the development of the three that remain: Angus, ornery Mr. Hunham and the cafeteria manager, Mary Lamb (Da'Vine Joy Randolph), who is mourning the loss of her son, a former Barton student who died in the Vietnam War. Randolph is stellar as Mary, powerfully communicating a character who is tender, firm and caring even as she grapples with fierce grief. Both she and the seasoned Paul Giamatti, who has collaborated with Payne previously on projects like Sideways (2004), seamlessly mesh with Sessa's young talent. Sessa as Angus is sharply clever, blunt and full of a passion and persistence that reflects Hunham's own. Over the course of the two-week holiday break, both Angus and Mary challenge Hunham's rigid exterior. The two act as his own ghosts of Christmas past, present and future as they imbue some much needed warmth into his lonely heart. Sessa's performance grows even more impressive with the realization that The Holdovers is his debut in film. Town & Country notes that the movie was shot at various New England boarding schools, including Groton, St. Mark's and Deerfield. After auditioning authentic students from these schools, producers stumbled across Sessa, who received the role of Angus six rounds of auditions later.

Uplifted by a smattering of ethereal Christmas melodies and gentle seventies hits (like Yusuf / Cat Stevens' "The Wind"), The Holdovers underscores the rapid pace at which people can come together, if one is willing to delve past assumptions and first impressions. The movie is heartwarming without feeling overdone, and still provides a healthy holiday dosage of love, friendship and sincere affection.

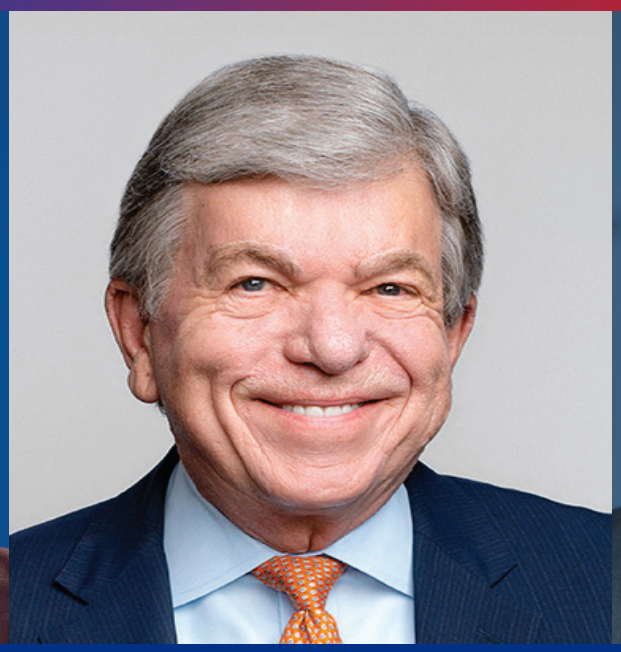
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

Paul Giamatti received an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor in 2006 for his role in Cinderella Man (2005).

COMMON GROUND
Cross-boundary dialogue on hot-button political issues.

TAMING THE CHAOS

How Can We Bridge the Divides in DC?



VAL DEMINGS
executive fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center;
former U.S. Representative from Florida

ROY BLUNT
executive fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center;
former U.S. Senator from Missouri

***Moderator:* STEVE SCULLY**
senior vice president of communications,
Bipartisan Policy Center

MONDAY
DECEMBER 4

7:30 P.M.
CHAPEL
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Common Ground is a multi-format program to help prepare students for active citizenship. Designed to explore cross-boundary political thought and complex social issues, Common Ground brings highly respected thought leaders to the Hamilton campus to participate in small classroom dialogues and large event discussions. Topics intertwined with the College's curriculum are chosen to foster critical thinking and holistic examination of difficult and often contentious national and global policy issues.

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The brutality of the boxing business

by Owen Lewis '24
SPORTS EDITOR

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID BECKER/GETTY IMAGES

David Benavidez pummeled Demetrius Andrade en route to a sixth-round stoppage.

On Nov. 25, I purchased the $75.00 pay-per-view boxing card on Showtime, headlined by David Benavidez vs. Demetrius Andrade. This is, on the face of it, an insane decision. Watching people hit each other is not a pastime any reasonable person would recommend, and parting with the best part of a hundred bucks to do so...well, you know what they say about a fool and their money.

But I thought I had a good reason to buy the fights on Saturday. Boxing may be violent, terribly run and possibly corrupt, but its participants have irresistible stories. I wanted both Benavidez and Andrade to win. Benavidez is a wonderful fighter, a powerful beast of a guy with an inexhaustible gas tank, and he is in line for a shot at Canelo Álvarez, the face of the sport (who I happen to strongly dislike and hope Benavidez beats). Andrade, 35, is a skilled defensive boxer and has been avoided by fighters of note his entire career due to his tricky southpaw style. He has seen his resume lag well behind his talents as a result. This was his big shot.

Then there was the co-main, between José Benavidez (David's brother) and Jermall Charlo (brother of Jermell, who Álvarez crushed last month). José was once a highly touted prospect, but was shot while walking his dog in 2016 and hasn't been the same since. Charlo has not defended his middleweight title in years due to personal issues. When Brian Custer of The Last Stand podcast recently asked Charlo how bad things had gotten, Charlo got quiet and talked about how he would look at his life and feel many degrees removed from it. Again, I wanted both fighters to win.

Then Charlo weighed in almost four pounds over the 163-pound catchweight for the bout. He tried to make weight again later that day and somehow weighed more. This is a grave offense in boxing; weight classes and catchweights exist for a reason, and being heavier than mandated can result in an unfair advantage in punching power. And it had an extra sting here, since José Benavidez was not as naturally heavy as Charlo and had to climb the weight classes to get the fight (basically, he was a sacrificial lamb for Charlo's return). "Hard to defend this guy anymore," said Dan Cannobio of the Inside Boxing Live podcast on Twitter. "Coming in overweight for a catchweight fight is insane."

That may be. But I liked Charlo after watching his interview with Custer, and my heart went out to him after hearing him talk about his personal issues. It was hard for me to mentally condemn him for the transgression...until I started thinking about José Benavidez, and how his career had been crippled by him getting shot, and how Charlo had just increased the chances that he would knock Benavidez out by breaking the rules.

And then the fights started, and Charlo looked completely unbothered by everything José Benavidez did, and I felt bad for Benavidez because of the weight discrepancy. Charlo landed some colossal punches on the smaller Benavidez, who, to his credit, walked through them and kept trying until the final bell. They started jawing at each other towards the end. I felt awful for Benavidez, who took a prolonged beating for no reward and had essentially been fed to Charlo to give him a soft touch in his delayed return to the ring.

David Benavidez thrashed Andrade, soaking up his opponent's speed and quick combinations of punches in the early rounds before breaking him down with one heavy shot after another. Andrade went down in the fourth round, and though he got up and threw a few more spirited flurries, you could see in his eyes that he was done. The fifth was a beatdown. After the sixth, the referee told Andrade's corner that he would stop the fight if another round like the previous one happened. They threw in the towel after that.

Andrade's career is essentially over. At the very least, he will not get another fight of this magnitude. He did not do much wrong, he just ran into an unstoppable opponent in Benavidez. But the business cares not. Having waited so long to get his chance, it was over in eighteen minutes of brutality. My heart broke for him a little.

I was glad for David Benavidez, who has done more than enough to earn a fight with Canelo. But then I remembered something he had said in Showtime's All Access series in the leadup to the fight. He had been talking about how his father had been hard on him as a child. They had nearly parted ways before eventually reconciling. "Without trauma, there can't be no greatness," Benavidez said. And then in his press conference: "I love fighting." Then my heart broke for him too.

Showtime Boxing is ending at the close of 2023. Showtime's new corporate overlords at Paramount Plus are going in another direction, which is weak billionaire speak for "we're going to lay off dozens of hardworking people and kill a decades-old institution because we think it will save us money." Custer's The Last Stand podcast will need a new home. All Access is done. The Showtime Boxing Podcast hosted by Eric Raskin and Kieran Mulvaney, which I spent exorbitant amounts of time listening to in 2023, is done at the end of this year.

"It sucks, but it's reality," is the appropriate attitude to take about the demise of Showtime Boxing, and, for that matter, the appropriate attitude for Andrade to take about his crushing loss. Sometimes I wonder how people can accept the "it's reality" part of the equation. Imagine training at something all your life, going undefeated as a professional until 35 years old, then getting shellacked on the cusp of greatness. I suppose Andrade, José Benavidez, and everyone at Showtime Boxing will find consolations and other joys at some point. But I hate that they have to.

Hamilton Continentals sports roundup

by Owen Lewis '24
SPORTS EDITOR

Winter might not technically begin until December 21, but with the first snowfall, it seems like the cold season is in full swing already. Sports are transitioning to the indoors. Instead of sadly walking through the slush this coming week, why not attend a sporting event inside a cozy building? Basketball, swimming and diving, squash and much more are in season. Here are some upcoming competitions, athlete spotlights and more recent results.

Women's basketball

Women's basketball is off to a flying start, winning their first six games of the season. Their latest? A dominating 57-37 victory over winless William Smith. Taylor Lambo '26 recorded 20 points and 10 rebounds in the comfortable win. The Continentals are yet to play a game against their fellow NESCAC squads, but the first leg of the season could not have gone better. Next, Hamilton will play a fellow undefeated team in the University of Maine at Fort Kent, in the Ed Hockenbury Classic on Dec. 1.

Football

On the face of it, the football team's season was disappointing, given that they finished with a 3-6 record. But there is a lot of hope for the future. Luke Kurzum '27 was elected Rookie of the Year in the NESCAC following a season in which he excelled at both passing and rushing. In the eight games, Kurzum threw for more than 1,000 yards and seven touchdowns in total.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH MCKEE

Luke Peplowski '25 (above) has been selected for the first-string All Region team.

Men's basketball

Men's basketball took a brutal 75-73 loss to the SUNY Cortland Red Dragons on Nov. 28. The Continentals trailed by seven at stages and rallied to pull within one point, but could never quite take the lead. They fall to two wins and three losses. Their next game is on Dec. 2 at 1:30 against Carnegie Mellon in the University Athletic Association Challenge.

Athlete honors: women's hockey

Sami Quackenbush '24 was selected as the NESCAC women's hockey player of the week. As a defender, goal-scoring is not her responsibility, but she has assisted on an impressive eight goals between the Continentals' last two games. Her assists and points totals lead the NESCAC.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH MCKEE

Taylor Lambo '26 (above) recorded a double-double against William Smith.

Athlete honors: soccer

Following his selection for the all-NESCAC third team last season, soccer midfielder Luke Peplowski '25 has been chosen for the first-string All-Region team in 2023. He scored six goals and contributed five assists this season, and his Hamilton career total of 14 assists is third on the all-time Continentals leaderboard. He started in every game for the Continentals in 2023 and will likely be crucial tagain next season.

Erin Rayhill '25 earned all-region third team honors following her four-goal, four-assist season. Playing in every game but one this past season, she was instrumental in the Continentals' eight-win, four-loss, four-draw stint this fall. She has scored ten goals in her Hamilton career.

Upcoming competition

This Friday is a big one for Hamilton sports, with men's and women's swimming and diving in action in Ithaca. Women's ice hockey is playing at home; the men's team will play in Hartford. Women's basketball clashes with the University of Maine at the Fort Kent Ed Hockenbury Classic in Northfield, Vermont. Many of the same teams are in action again the following day, Dec. 2, in addition to men's and women's squash and men's basketball. Be sure to catch a game as a study break or to root on your friends and peers! Stay tuned for more on-campus coverage.